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LETTER DATED 16 JANUARY 1997 FROM THE CHARGE D'AFFAIRES A.I. OF THE PERMANENT MISSION OF ETHIOPIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

With reference to the letter from the Permanent Representative of the Sudan and the annex thereto, circulated as Security Council document S/1997/32 of 14 January 1997, and on instructions from my Government, I have the honour to transmit herewith a letter from Mr. Seyoum Mesfin, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, addressed to you in response to the baseless accusation of the Government of the Sudan against Ethiopia.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Berhanemeskel NEGA
Chargé d'Affaires, a.i.

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Annex

Letter dated 16 January 1997 from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia addressed to the President of the Security Council

I wish to refer to the letter dated 13 January 1997 from Mr. Ali Osman Mohamed Taha, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Sudan, addressed to you. I would also like to draw your attention to the press statement that my Ministry issued on the matter on 14 January 1997, which was transmitted to you for circulation as a document of the Security Council.

Permit me from the outset to reiterate, in the most categorical manner, the response of my Government to the accusation of the Sudanese Government against Ethiopia and its defence forces as contained in the above-mentioned press statement by my Ministry. Ethiopia and its defence forces had no role in the military setback suffered by the Government of the Sudan in its Blue Nile State. Outrageous and baseless claims were made in the letter from the Foreign Minister of the Sudan which are completely out of character for Ethiopia.

Would any one believe that Ethiopia, which has handled with wisdom and patience the various blatant provocations against it by the Sudanese authorities, including the state-sponsored terrorism they carried out in its capital against a head of State, suddenly change tack and engage in the kind of activities attributed to it by the Sudan? This would be unbecoming of the new Ethiopia and our country has resisted and will continue to resist being dragged by the Sudanese authorities into imitating the insane policy that they have been following towards their neighbours, including towards Ethiopia. This despite the very many crimes committed by the Government of the Sudan against Ethiopia. If there are rogue States in the world, there is little doubt that the Government in Khartoum would top the list. The Security Council has ample evidence to corroborate this claim. The Khartoum Government is still awaiting a proper verdict from the Security Council in connection with the assassination attempt against President Mubarak of the Arab Republic of Egypt. Undoubtedly, the Sudanese authorities have convinced themselves that they would not get from the Security Council more than a minor slap on the wrist on this grave issue. Accordingly, it appears to have concluded that it can continue to flout openly and in a shameless manner all the rules of international law and the norms of civilized behaviour.

The call made on 29 December 1996 by Mr. Ali Hassan Ali, the Sudanese representative in Mogadishu, for a Jihad against Ethiopia by Somalis is one of the latest instances confirming that the present regime in Khartoum is deliberately committed to activities that undermine international law and the Charter of the United Nations and thus consign our subregion to a state of perpetual instability. The call was all the more diabolical because it was made during the most critical phase of the Sodere High-level Consultation of the Somali faction leaders, a process that was publicly supported by the Sudan as a member of the Intergovernmental Authority on Drought (IGAD) family. It should not, however, be assumed that this kind of irresponsible utterance is limited to

low-level Sudanese officials. I trust that you have been following the latest developments in the Sudan, in which the country's President and other senior officials of the country have been inciting their people for Jihad against Ethiopia and against others.

This latest accusation levelled against Ethiopia by the Sudan is patently aimed at providing an alibi for the military setback visited upon it by the Sudanese People's Liberation Army and its allies.

Those who follow closely the developments in our region know full well that Ethiopia has, along with other members of IGAD, made all the necessary efforts for peace in the Sudan and for an equitable solution to the crisis in that country. Ethiopia will continue this effort because it is convinced that peace is indivisible in our region. All the more so because of the history of instability in our subregion which is not yet over. As such, Ethiopia is convinced that there is a vital need to put a stop to this cycle of violence. In this regard, there can be no doubt that the major source of instability and chaos in our subregion at the present time is the extremist regime in Khartoum. Can one conclude otherwise about a regime that calls for a Jihad through its representative in Mogadishu against a Government that is working for peace in Somalia and that has assisted the Somalis to take the most significant step in three years towards national reconciliation?

I wish to appeal to you to ensure that the Security Council is not diverted by this latest Sudanese diversionary tactic from the major responsibility that the Council is still required to discharge with regard to taking the most appropriate measures against the Khartoum Government for the assassination attempt it supported and masterminded against the President of the Arab Republic of Egypt.

Ethiopia has made all the necessary efforts to ensure that the Sudan would hand over to Ethiopia those who were implicated in the attempt and who continue to be harboured by the Khartoum Government. Our bilateral effort was in vain and the efforts of the Organization of African Unity were likewise without results. I know you are fully aware that the Sudanese authorities have continued to prevaricate, since the matter has been referred by Ethiopia to the Security Council.

The latest accusation by the Sudan cannot be viewed outside this context because it is part of the same diversionary tactic which must by now be familiar to the Security Council. Not that the Sudanese regime has no internal problems regarding which, as I have pointed out earlier, Ethiopia and other IGAD member States have always demonstrated their goodwill to be of help. But the Sudan has chosen to accuse Eritrea, when it faced military setback in the north-east, Ethiopia, when the opposition put the Sudanese regime on the defensive in the east, and Uganda, when it was faced with a military debacle in the south. The Sudanese Government should not be allowed to continue to externalize its domestic crisis and, in the process, defame its neighbours such as Ethiopia.

Under these circumstances, and given the threat that the Khartoum regime poses to Ethiopia's security, my country has no option but to remain always vigilant, with a view to exercising its right of self-defence against a regime that the Security Council knows has become a menace to the peace and stability of the entire subregion.

(Signed) Seyoum MESFIN
Minister for Foreign Affairs